



ODIHR e-newsletter

OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

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Upcoming events

Roundtable on Intolerance and Discrimination Against Christians, Vienna, 4 March

Expert Workshop on the Development of Effective Hate Crime Laws, Vienna 19 March

Roundtable on Racism in the OSCE Region, Vienna 20 March

Latest reports

[Human Dimension Seminar on Constitutional Justice Systems - final report](#)

[Parliamentary elections in Moldova - needs assessment report](#)

[Parliamentary elections in Liechtenstein - needs assessment report](#)

[Presidential and municipal Elections in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia - needs assessment report](#)

[Expert Workshop on Reform of the Legal Profession and Access to Justice - final report](#)

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[Legislationline.org](#)
[TANDIS](#)

Russian version

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Electoral framework upgrade for Belarus

ODIHR is to work with the authorities of Belarus on the reform of the country's electoral framework.

The co-operation was agreed on during ODIHR Director Janez Lenarcic's January visit to Minsk, where he met with top officials, including Foreign Minister Sergei Martynov (pictured, left).



First-step consultations at the expert level begin in February.

[More](#)

War crimes interviews wind up

Members of ODIHR's Rule of Law Unit are completing interviews with leading practitioners involved in the processing of war crimes cases at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, in the Hague, and in Serbia, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

As part of the ODIHR-ICTY-UNICRI "[Supporting the Transition Process](#)" research project, three ODIHR consultants interviewed about 80 investigators, prosecutors, defence lawyers, judges, victim and witness support staff, and outreach personnel.

"The aim is to hear from the practitioners which capacity-building and knowledge-transfer activities and methodologies work best," explained Robert Adams, head of ODIHR's Democratization Department.

The next step will be to discuss the findings at a regional workshop to take place in Sarajevo in the spring.

ODIHR Director urges action against rising tide of anti-Semitism

The head of ODIHR has voiced his concern about an increase in anti-Semitic acts across the OSCE region.

"We call on all participating States to step up their efforts to thoroughly investigate and respond to anti-Semitic and all other hate crimes committed within their territories," said Ambassador Janez Lenarcic, in [comments](#) released to mark International Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January.

Recently reported anti-Semitic incidents have included physical and verbal attacks, as well as acts of arson and vandalism targeting synagogues, cemeteries and Holocaust memorial sites.

Election observers to Skopje

ODIHR commences an Election Observation Mission to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on 11 February, when the core team

arrives, with long-term observers arriving on 17 February.

The mission will continue at least until the presidential and municipal elections on 22 March, with a potential second round on 5 April. ODIHR has requested 24 long-term and 300 short-term observers for the mission.

ODIHR calls for contributions to new best practices directory



ODIHR's Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Department is calling for contributions to a directory it is helping to prepare of educational practices and initiatives aimed at combating intolerance against Muslims.

The initiative is a collaboration with the Association of Muslim Social Scientists in the UK and the International Association for Intercultural Education.

"Education is one of the most efficient means to prevent hatred and bias," said Jo-Anne Bishop (pictured), head of ODIHR's Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Department, at a recent ODIHR-organized December [meeting](#) in Vienna that addressed rising anti-Muslim attitudes among majority youth populations in some participating States.

The deadline for submissions is 15 May. For further information, please visit the OSCE's Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Information System ([TANDIS](#)).

Anti-Semitism teaching materials unveiled

ODIHR has released several new [country versions](#) of its [teaching tools](#) on anti-Semitism.

The materials were published in Poland, Ukraine and Slovakia at the end of 2008.

Country versions for Germany and Denmark were already issued earlier last year, and a Dutch version was published in 2007.

In Ukraine and Lithuania, ODIHR supported "train-the-trainer" sessions in October and November.

Meanwhile, guidelines for educators (*Addressing Anti-Semitism: Why and How*), which ODIHR developed in close co-operation with Jerusalem's Yad Vashem research centre in 2007, have now been translated into five languages: Croatian, German, Polish, Russian and Spanish.



Early education essential for Roma and Sinti integration, Ministerial Council tells ODIHR

The OSCE's Ministerial Council has decided to enhance efforts to improve the situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE area.

The decision reaffirms OSCE commitments regarding Roma and Sinti and urges participating States to enhance their efforts to ensure that Roma and Sinti people are able to participate fully in society and to take measures to eradicate discrimination against them, as called for by the 2003 OSCE Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Rom and Sinti.

The Ministerial Council has tasked ODIHR to assist participating States in promoting access to early education for Roma and Sinti children.

Andrzej Mirga, head of the ODIHR Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues welcomed the decision: "The dramatic gap in education between Roma and Sinti and majority populations can be best overcome by providing equal and non-discriminatory access to early education."

New publications and translations



- Human Rights Defenders in the OSCE Region: Challenges and Good Practices ([English](#))
- Hate crimes in the OSCE Region - incidents and responses ([English](#))
- The Death Penalty in the OSCE Area: Background Paper 2008 ([English](#), [Russian](#))
- Implementation of the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti Within the OSCE Area - Status Report ([English](#))
- Compensation for Trafficked and Exploited Persons in the OSCE Region ([English](#))

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